

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A contact for a semiconductor device, comprising:

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an intermediate conductive layer in electrical [contact] communication with [a] an underlying structure of the semiconductor device;
an insulator component [disposed] positioned adjacent said intermediate conductive layer so as to at least thermally insulate said underlying structure; and
an electrically conductive contact layer adjacent said insulator component and in communication with said intermediate conductive layer.

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4. (Amended) The contact of claim 1, wherein said insulator component comprises an insulator material [selected from the group comprising] including at least one of undoped silicon dioxide, doped silicon dioxide, silicon nitride, a thermoset [polymers] polymer, and a thermoplastic [polymers] polymer.

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8. (Amended) The contact of claim 1, wherein said intermediate conductive layer comprises [a material selected from the group comprising] at least one of a refractory [metals] metal, a refractory metal [nitrides] nitride, and aluminum.

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11. (Amended) The contact of claim 1, wherein said contact layer comprises [a material selected from the group comprising] at least one of a refractory [metals] metal, a refractory metal [nitrides] nitride, and aluminum.

12. (Amended) A contact for a memory element of a semiconductor device, the memory element including [that includes] a phase change component, the contact comprising:
an insulator component comprising a thermally and electrically insulative material;
an intermediate conductive layer adjacent said insulator component and in electrical and thermal communication with the phase change component; and

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a contact layer adjacent said insulator component and in electrical contact with said intermediate conductive layer, said contact layer and said intermediate conductive layer substantially enveloping said insulator component.

13. (Amended) The contact of claim 12, wherein said thermally and electrically insulative material [is selected from the group comprising] comprises at least one of undoped silicon dioxide, doped silicon dioxide, silicon nitride, a thermoset [resins] resin, and a thermoplastic [polymers] polymer.

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17. (Amended) The contact of claim 12, wherein said intermediate conductive layer comprises [a material selected from the group comprising] at least one of a refractory [metals] metal, a refractory metal [nitrides] nitride, and aluminum.

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20. (Amended) The contact of claim 12, wherein said contact layer comprises [a material selected from the group comprising] at least one of a refractory [metals] metal, a refractory metal [nitrides] nitride, and aluminum.

32. (Amended) A contact for a semiconductor device including a contact layer and an intermediate conductive layer which partially contact one another and substantially envelop an insulator component positioned over an underlying structure of the semiconductor device so as to at least thermally insulate the underlying structure, the contact fabricated by the process comprising:

forming the intermediate conductive layer on a surface of the semiconductor device and in electrical thermal communication with an active device region of the semiconductor device;

depositing a dielectric layer on the intermediate conductive layer;

patterning said dielectric layer to define the insulator component;

forming the contact layer substantially over an exposed area of the insulator component and in electrical communication with the intermediate conductive layer;

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